

Planning and Development
Testimony of Paul Acker
In Support of HB-5105

February 3, 2021

Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Ranking Member Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo and distinguished members of the planning and development committee. My name is Paul Acker, I'm a registered voter in the town of Portland and a person who has been adopted.

I am submitting my testimony in support of HB-6105, An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Certificates by Adult Adopted Persons. As an adoptee, I know the hole one feels in their life from being adopted even being in the most loving family. One cannot help but think of a parallel life going on that they are not a part of. Let's set aside the family traditions they will never know and look at the medical information they will not have access to. Through my entire life whenever a doctor has asked me, "What is your family medical history?" I have had to answer, "I do not know, I'm adopted." The cursory information my family received at my adoption did not cover heart disease and other health concerns that developed in my family long after my birth.

I was one of the lucky ones, a few years back, in a moment of frustration, I did a quick Internet search listing my biological mother's name in the college he attended. The first hit on a search, was her obituary. In the obituary were listed four of her children who I tried to reach out to. I was able to communicate with who I thought was my half-sister, Becky. I eventually discovered that we all had the same father and mother. In the few years since our initial conversation, we have gotten to know each other and our families quite well. The deep chasm that I felt was a part of me over the years has been filled in. I have gotten more detailed family and medical history, that has profoundly changed in a good way, the filter that I view myself with.

We all know the technology has advanced to the point where one can reconnect to their family. However, the technology has its limitations. You, as our representatives, have the power to help people fill their chasm and to help them discover the true story of their path. I know many say that there was a deal between the adoption agency and the mothers who gave up their children, however, there was a third party that had no say, no choice in the matter.

Through the many years that this bill has been brought before the legislature, it is high time that we step up and do the right thing for the adoptees. I ask that you not only vote affirming this bill but champion its path to the governor's desk for signature. Thank you.